AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-12 (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) A messaging platform for a component-based software system, the platform comprising:

a connection assembler for at least one of creating, managing and manipulating a first
      messaging platform connection;

a protocol management framework for implementation of a predetermined transport protocol
      over the first messaging platform connection;

a schema generator for, responsive to a request for service received over a second messaging
      platform connection, creating a document according to a predetermined format, the
      document containing information to be provided to another system over the first
      messaging platform connection;

an encoding component for converting a document in the predetermined format into a first
      encoded object that can be understood and used by the other system, the first encoded
      object being encoded according to a default encoding protocol; and

a translation component for encoding a document in the predetermined format into a second
      encoded object that can be understood and used by the other system, the second
      encoded object being encoded according to an encoding protocol different from the
      default encoding protocol.

14. (Original) The platform of claim 13, wherein:

the information is provided by a service component; and

the request for service is in a form not understandable by the service component.

15. (Original) The platform of claim 13, wherein the service request is in a platform and application-independent format.

16. (Original) The platform of claim 15, wherein the service request is in an Extensible Markup Language format.

17. (Original) The platform of claim 13, further comprising a lookup service for determining a service component to handle the service request.

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18. (Original) The platform of claim 17, wherein the lookup service determines the service component to handle the service request based on information associated with the service component.

19. (Original) The platform of claim 13, wherein the protocol management framework implements HTTP for transport.

20. (Original) The platform of claim 13, wherein the default protocol is SOAP.

21. (Previously Presented) The platform of claim 13, wherein an identifier of the encoding object is included in a Universal Resource Locator (URL), and the URL is sent to the second messaging platform in combination with the document in the predetermined format.

22. (Previously Presented) An apparatus comprising:
logic instructions operable to:
    receive a service request from a sender, wherein the service request invokes a service
        component and provides parameters required by the service component;
    determine whether the service component invoked by the service request is available;
    determine the parameters in the service request that are required by the service
        component;
    create a request document that includes the parameters required by the service component
        based on at least some of the parameters in the service request;
    create an encoder object upon receipt of the service request, wherein the encoder object
        identifies a handler that translates the request document to a document format
        required by the service component; and
    transmit the encoder object and the request document to a system hosting the service
        component.

23. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 22 further comprising:
logic instructions operable to:
    invoke the service component using the second document;
    receive a response from the service component in the document format required by the
        service component;

convert the response to a response message in a platform-independent format;

provide the response message to a message platform;

convert the response message to a format required by the sender.

24. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 22, wherein the encoding object is included in a Universal Resource Locator (URL).

25. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 22 further comprising:
logic instructions operable to:

create a connection information file that identifies an external host on which the service component resides.

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 25 wherein the connection information file further identifies a port on which the service component resides.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 25 wherein the connection information file further identifies a transport mode and a handler that is operable to create the second document.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 22 further comprising:
logic instructions operable to:

generate a Graphical User Interface (GUI) to identify and store addresses of external host computers on which service components that can be invoked by the sender reside.

29. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 22 further comprising:
logic instructions operable to:

generate a repository of information regarding the service component, wherein the repository includes at least one of the group consisting of: an identifier, a classification, dependencies, and version of the service component.

30. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 29 wherein the repository includes a component data section and a shared data section, and the shared data section includes information that can be shared between service components and changed dynamically at runtime.

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31. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 22 further comprising:

logic instructions operable to:

create a catalog of components in the repository, wherein the catalog can be accessed by authorized users.

32. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 22 further comprising:

logic instructions operable to:

generate instructions to specify remote interfaces and provide an interface for writing remote objects.

33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 29 further comprising:

logic instructions operable to:

map relationships between objects in the service components.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 22 further comprising:

logic instructions operable to:

implement a transaction protocol to coordinate transactions from disparate systems communicated via different protocols.

35. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 22 further comprising:

logic instructions operable to:

select an alternate service component when the service component invoked by the service request is not available.

36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of Claim 35 wherein further comprising:

logic instructions operable to:

select the alternate service component based on at least one factor of the group consisting of: queue depth, average compute time, and network latency.

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